which rendered them a ſect truly impious; for they denied the reſurrection of the dead, and the exiſtence of angels, and of the ſpirſts or ſouls of men departed (Mat. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8. ) They held, that there is no ſpiritual being but God only; that as to man, this world is his all. They did not deny but that we had reaſonable ſouls: but they maintained this ſoul was mortal; and, by a neceſſary conſequence, they denied the rewards and puniſhments of another life. They pre­tended alſo, that what is ſaid of the exiſtence of angels, and of a future reſurrection, are nothing but illuſions. St Epiphanius, and after him St Auſtin, have advanced, that the Sadducees denied the Holy Ghoſt. But nei­ther Joſephus nor the evangeliſts accuſe them of any er­ror like this. It has been alſo imputed to them, that they thought God corporeal, and that they received none of the prophecies.

It is pretty difficult to apprehend how they could deny the being of angels, and yet receive the books of Moles, where ſuch frequent mention is made of angels and of their appearances. Grotius and M. Le Clerc obſerve, that it is very likely they looked upon angels, not as particular beings, ſubſiſting of themſelves, but as powers, emanations, or qualities, inſeparable from the Deity, as the ſun-beams are inſeparable from the ſun. Or perhaps they held angels not to be ſpiritual but mortal; juſt as they thought that ſubſtance to be which animates us and thinks in us. The ancients do not tell us how they ſolved this difficulty, that might be urged againſt them from ſo many paſſages of the Pentateuch, where mention is made oſ angels.

As the Sadducees acknowledged neither puniſhments nor recompenſes in another life, ſo they were inexorable in their chaſtiſing of the wicked. They obſerved the law themſelves, and cauſed it to be obſerved by others, with the utmoſt rigour. They admitted of none of the traditions, explications, or modifications, of the Phariſees; they kept only to the text of the law; and maintained, that only what was written was to be ob­ſerved.

The Sadducees are accuſed of rejecting all the books of Scripture except thoſe of Moſes; and to ſupport this opinion, it is obſerved, that our Saviour makes uſe of no Scripture againſt them, but paſſages taken out of the Pentateuch. But Scaliger produces good proofs to vin­dicate them from this reproach. He obſerves, that they did not appear in Iſrael till after the number of the holy books were fixed; and that if they had been to chooſe out of the canonical Scriptures, the Pentateuch was leſs favourable to them than any other book, ſince it often makes mention of angels and their apparition. Beſides, the Sadducees were preſent in the temple and at other religious aſſemblies, where the books of the prophets were read indifferently as well as thoſe of Moſes. They were in the chief employs of the nation, many of them were even prieſts. Would the Jews have ſuffered in theſe employments perſons that rejected the greateſt part of their Scriptures? Menaffeben-Iſrael ſays expreſsly, that indeed they did not reject the prophets, but that they explained them in a ſenſe very different from that of the other Jews.

Joſephus aſſures us, that they denied deſtiny or fate; alleging, that theſe were only ſounds void of ſenſe, and that all the good or evil that happens to us is in conſe­quence of the good or evil ſide we have taken, by the free choice of our will. They ſaid alſo, that God was far removed from doing or knowing evil, and that man was the abſolute maſter of his own actions. This was roundly to deny a providence; and upon this footing I know not, ſays F. Calmet, what could be the religion of the Sadducees, or what influence they could aſcribe to God in things here below. However, it is certain they were not only tolerated among the Jews, but that they were admitted to the high-prieſthood itſelf. John Hircanus, high-prieſt of that nation, ſeparated himſelf in a ſignal manner from the ſect of the Phariſees, and went over to that of Sadoc. It is ſaid alſo, he gave ſtrict command to all the Jews, on pain of death, to re­ceive the maxims of this ſect. Ariſtobulus and Alex­ander Jannaeus, ſon of Hircanus, continued to favour the Sadducees; and Maimonides aſſures us, that under the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, they had in poſſeſſion all the offices of the Sanhedrim, and that there only remained of the party of the Phariſees, Simon the ſon of Secra. Caiaphas, who condemned Jeſus Cſhriſt to death, was a Sadducee (Acts, v. 17. iv. I. ); as alſo Ananus the younger, who put to death St James the brother of our Lord. At this day, the Jews hold as heretics that ſmall number of Sadducees that are to be found among them. See upon this matter *Serrar Trιbaercſ. Menaſſe ben-Iſrael de Reſurrectione mortuorum; Baſnage's Hiſtory of the Jews,* &c.; and *Calmet's Diſſertation upon the Sects of the Jews* before *the Commentary oſ St Mark.*

The ſect of the Sadducees was much reduced by the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and by the diſperſion of the Jews; but it revived afterwards. At the beginning of the third century it was ſo formidable in Egypt, that Ammonim, Origen’s maſter, when he ſaw them propa­gate their opinions in that country, thought himſelf obliged to write againſt them, or rather againſt the Jews, who tolerated the Sadducees, though they denied the fundamental points of their religion. The emperor Juſtinian mentions the Sadducees in one of his novels, baniſhes them out of all the places of his dominions, and condemns them to the ſevereſt puniſhments, \_as peo­ple that maintained atheiſtical and impious tenets; de­nying the reſurrection and the laſt judgment. Annus, or Ananus, a diſciple of Juda, ſon of Nachman, a fa­mous rabbin of trie 8th century, declared himſelf, as it is ſaid, in favour oſ the Sadducees, and ſtrenuoufly pro­tected them againſt their adverſaries. They had alſo acelebrated defender in the 12th century, in the perſon of Alpharag a Spaniſh rabbin. This doctor wrote againſt the Phariſees, the declared enemies of the Sadducees; and maintained by his public writings, that the purity of Judaiſm was only to be found among the Sadducees; that the traditions avowed by the Phariſees were uſeleſs; and that the ceremonies, which they had multiplied without end, were an inſupportable yoke. The rabbi Abraham ben-David Italleri replied to Al- pharag, and ſupported the ſect of the Phariſees by two great arguments, that of their univerſality and that of their antiquity. He proved their antiquity by a conti­nued ſucceſſion from Adam down to the year 1167; and their univerſality, becauſe the Phariſees are ſpread all the world over, and are found in all the ſynagogues. There are ſtill Sadducees in Africa and in ſeveral other places. They deny the immortality of the ſoul, and